

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

By reducing the number of seek operations in an operation to play back a signal from a recording medium, the amount of data temporarily stored in a read buffer memory employed in a signal recording/playback apparatus is large enough to be output as a playback signal during a seek operation, allowing a continuous playback operation to be carried out. In order to reduce the number of seek operations, a signal is always recorded onto the recording medium in continuous free areas each having a size equal to or larger than a predetermined recording/playback time length which is typically set at 1 minute. If it is necessary to insert an additional signal having a length smaller than the predetermined recording /playback time length into a point of insertion in an area already occupied by an existing signal, a continuous free area with a size equal to or larger than the predetermined recording/playback time length is newly allocated to the additional signal. The additional signal is then recorded in the free area instead of being inserted into the point of insertion. Since the free area is larger in size than the length of the additional signal, the rest of the free area is filled up with a portion of the existing signal adjacent to the point of insertion.